

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE KING COUNTRY: Or Explorations in New Zealand. By J. H. KERRY-NICHOLS. With numerous illustrations and a map. Scribner & Welford.

Mr. Kerry-Nichols has contributed some important data to the existing knowledge of the hitherto unexplored native domain of New Zealand, the home of the Maoris, a fertile, well-peopled, yet volcanic region. He made his way for six hundred miles through this prohibited country, often at the risk of his life, as when he undertook the ascent of two of the sacred mountains, thereby committing sacrilege in the eyes of the Maoris. They, however, did not detect the bold traveller, and he seems to have been treated on the whole with singular hospitality by these very interesting and many barbarians, for savages they certainly are not, possessing many arts and industries, an elaborate language and religion, and a wealth of tradition, and living at least as comfortably as the peasants of several countries in Europe. All through Maoriland hot springs and mineral springs, geysers, and the various effluent phenomena which indicate active volcanic regions, exist an unparalleled scale, and the traveller's descriptions of many of these natural wonders show that they deserve the most careful examination. The natives make full use of the hot springs, building villages close to them, and bathing in them regularly. Here is a description of the remarkably beautiful natural terraces of Te Tarata:

"As we looked upward the whole outline of the terrace assumed a semi-circular form, which spread out at its base in a graceful curve of many hundreds of feet, as it sloped down to the margin of the lake. The great, flat, rounded steps of pure white silica rose above tier, white and transparent. Parian marble, and, above them terrace after terrace mounted upward, rounded and semi-circular in form, as if designed by the hand of man, guided by the inspiration of the spirit of Art itself. All were formed out of a delicate tissue of silica which appeared to have been congealed into a lattice of the purest hue. Exclamation, or, if I may say so, admiration, filled all our hearts, and the beautified design was clearly and marvelously defined, and as the glittering warm water came rippling over them in a continuous flow, it started beneath the sun as if besieged by millions of diamonds and myriads of other pearls. Crystal pools, shaped as the resultants of the form of shells and leaves, and filled to their brims with water, blue and transparent, liquid turquoise, charmed the eye as we mounted to every step, while around the edges the bright crystals of silica had formed encrustations which made them appear as if set in a mass of miniature pearls. Every successive terrace seemed to spring up in greater magnificence from the one immediately before us as we approached the sun, and in formal angular-shaped steps, but in flat-topped elevations, with rounded edges, and sweeping curves, from which the wet, glittering silica hung in the shape of sparkling stalactites, which, interlacing themselves and each other, together, formed a delicate and almost transparent fringe which looked like a fantastic network of ice, so exquisitely beautiful in appearance and so delicately formed as to appear as if fashioned by the magic touch of a fairy hand. Mounting upward and upward where it seemed necessary for the booted foot of man to tread, and where the soft, crisp, silicious crystal forms, like the covering beneath the feet, we reached the summit, and sat down on a cluster of rocks which rose in a fantastic shape upon the very margin of the cup-shaped crater."

The country is very wild and difficult, full of great rivers and mountain chains and extensive marshes and primeval forests, travel through which is exceedingly exhausting and discouraging. Mr. Kerry-Nichols, however, was always ready to climb a mountain or risk his neck in getting a good view of a new waterfall, or wade through swamps and drag himself over fallen trees and through entangling copes. He possesses the true traveler's temperament, in fact, and makes light of labors which would have probably broken down most professional athletes. His description of the old Maori chief is especially interesting. These men belonged to a race of giants physically. They were nearly all splendid animals and not a few of them also possessed respectable intellects. It appears that the new generation is deteriorating in physique and there can be no doubt that when the white man once establishes himself in the King Country, as he is certain to do before long, the extinction of the Maoris will proceed with greatly accelerated pace. The worst vices of the pakeha are stronger for destruction than the best virtues of the Maori are potent for preservation. And should gold be positively discovered in the King Country, there will occur a rush which may sweep the remnant of the natives away prematurely.

Mr. Kerry-Nichols has described this interesting people and the remarkable region they inhabit with force and clearness. He has illustrated his work with many views sketched by himself on the spot, and he has added a new map showing his routes and the lay of the hitherto unexplored country. Altogether he has made a very honest and instructive as well as entertaining book.

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